



THE CHRIST FIBBED
LIFE
BY
Charles Cuthbert
Hall

1. 9. 15.

Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by *Rev. Fred A. Crandall.*

BV 4805 .H35x

Hall, Charles Cuthbert, 18

-1908.

The Christ-Filled Life

~~No. 283~~

167

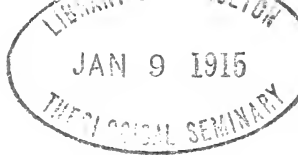
The late

Mrs Anna Heall Randall

86 North Church St

Canaseroga NY

3/15/13



THE
CHRIST-FILLED LIFE

BY
✓
CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FIFTH THOUSAND

NEW YORK: 46 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY
BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

COPYRIGHT, 1897,
BY THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY.

C. J. PETERS & SON, TYPOGRAPHERS, BOSTON.
A. MUDGE & SON, PRINTERS.

TO

Young Libes Eberywhere.



I.

CHRIST FOR THE INNER LIFE.

CHRIST FOR THE INNER LIFE.

“The glory of this mystery, Christ in you.”

MEMORY has been taking me back to a summer holiday, years ago, in the pleasant valleys of Nova Scotia. I recall the wonder and delight with which I saw the ocean tide come up the Bay of Fundy, and fill the empty river-beds. Through the hours of the ebb, the Nova Scotian rivers dwindled and shrank within their banks. Broad and barren reaches of sand exposed themselves; ships listed heavily on their sides, deserted by the feeble stream trickling in mid-channel. Then came the tide up the Bay of Fundy, up from the abundance of the unfathomable sea. You could *hear* it coming, with a distant sound of motion and life and unmeasured power. You could *see* it coming, with a pure white girde of foam, that looked in sunlight like a zone of fire. You could *smell* it coming, with the smell of freshness, the breath of coolness, the waft of far-off scents from breeze-blown ocean leagues. You could almost *feel* it coming; for the heart stirred at the sight of it, and the pulse quickened at the rush of it, and the joy of strength arose in the soul. It came from the mighty fulness that could afford to give so grandly; it came from the opulence of an ocean that could spend itself without fear of poverty, that could pour itself out to fill a thousand rivers, yet be not diminished; it came, as Arnold said, with “murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.”

It entered the river-bed ; it filled the empty channel as one fills a pitcher at the fountain ; it covered the barren sands with motion and sparkling life ; it lifted the heavy ships, gave back to them their rights of buoyancy, set them free upon the broad waterway of world-wide opportunity ; it changed the very face of the land from sadness and apathy and dulness to animation and color and glittering activity. So Christ comes into empty human lives, and fills them with his fulness, which is the very fulness of God. So he stops the ebb of power, entering with his flood of strength. The difference between a life without Christ and a life with Christ is the difference between ebb and flood ; the one is growing emptier, the other is growing fuller. This does not require to be argued ; it is proved by living. The river of which we have spoken, wherein the tide is ebbing, is an almost painfully faithful type of the life into which Christ has not been permitted to come. What do we note in that river ? The narrowing stream, the widening stretch of barren sand, the helpless ships. The narrowing stream is the decline of the spiritual sense in a life that grows from childhood on to man's or woman's maturity, on, it may be to later years, without permitting Christ to enter, and to fill with his fulness, the Inner Life. I believe that in many children, perhaps in all except those who are born into the most miserable and unhappy surroundings (and often even in those so born), there is at first a certain fulness of spiritual possibility, which is like a river at high tide. I think I could define some elements of that spiritual possibility. It comes, in part, from the innocency of the child's mind, its unacquaintance with the facts and forms of wickedness, its ignorance, its sacred ignorance, of evil. It

comes, in part, from the sensitiveness of the child's faculties, — the eye not dim with over-use and tears, the ear not dull with the din of the world-struggle, the heart not stoical through familiarity with suffering, the hand not callous with uncongenial toil. It comes, in part, from the affectionateness of the child's temperament, — its God-given instinct to love, its delight in gentle treatment, its clinging confidence in those who will not repel its sweet advances. It comes, in part, from the brooding of the Spirit, like a dove, upon the little child. He is there before the mother's arms have held the child, or the father's lips have kissed it. He is there to bless the dawning of its consciousness, we know not how, with some mysterious capacity to turn toward God. He is there to make it easy for those little hands to fold themselves in prayer; easy for those pure and guileless lips to pronounce the mystic name of Jesus. And the child's life, in that first stage of its career upon the earth, is wondrously full of spiritual possibility. In that early morning hour the tide is very high in the river of its life. The glorious fulness of possibility makes a young child's life brimming with the potency of God. But how soon the ebb comes, if Christ be not invited to enter the young life. How soon the stream in that life channel begins to narrow and dwindle and drain away in the decline of the spiritual sense, as the child becomes a youth, the youth a man or a woman, going on without Christ. Less and less sensitiveness to the spiritual appeal, less and less repugnance to the thought of iniquity, less and less affinity with the unseen and the divine. It is an ebb-tide that we have seen many times with unspeakable regret.

And in that river, as the tide goes out, we note the

widening stretch of barren sand. As the beautiful stream narrows, the barren and unsightly bottom forces itself upon us. The sand, the weed, the slime, the sunken wreckage, come to light. It is the disillusionizing of life by natural process of time, unless the fulness of Christ be pouring in to cover and to bury that which has been laid bare. A young, fresh heart is full of a sense of the glory of living. To such a heart it is great and beautiful to be alive. The present, the future, wear a dignity to which the heart answers with enthusiasm and with hope. But how often have I seen this disappear with the ebb of the spiritual sense, and the dark, unprofitable depths of baser things laid bare as the belief in God's presence receded from the soul. Life was robbed of its holy idealism; the sacredness of living ebbed away, and in its place arose and spread abroad a sullen waste of unspiritual thinking; a sunken depth of unhallowed living; a life becoming, every day of its continuance without Christ, more hard, more barren, more unpromising. Nothing is to me more saddening than this when I see it exposing its presence and its development in the life of youth. It is one of the first unhappy changes in personal history to record itself outwardly in the altered expression of countenance. Do I need to ask if the tide is going down when I look at the estuary, and see the buoys all heading down channel, and the sand-bars drying in yellow barrenness? Do I need to ask if the early sense of spirituality is ebbing away for lack of the inrush of the sanctifying power of Christ when I see that strange and unmistakable secularizing of countenance growing on one who, refusing to let Christ enter and fill the Inner Life, is becoming used to the hard, muddy facts of sin.

And once again, in that river, as the tide goes out, we note the helpless ships; things that were made for the elements now receding from them; creations of strength and beauty when permitted to move in their own environment, to float like sea-fowl on the breast of the brimming river. But now that the tide is gone, what more useless, what more unsightly, than the stranded ship? It can serve no purpose, it can fulfil no destiny, save to lie in the midst of barrenness and wreckage, and to moulder to destruction, but for that great inrush of the coming tide, to fill the river, to lift the helpless boat. So do our spiritual powers, the gifts and endowments for service, fall into disuse and helpless inability, as the spiritual sense ebbs with time, and Christ is not admitted to fill the Inner Life, and to lift upon the tide of his grace the powers that are failing through neglect. The youth enters his career with strong possibilities of spiritual usefulness lying undeveloped and unexpressed within his life, like ships moored within the harbor, waiting to be sent forth. Who that lives much with the young can fail to be impressed by the splendid possibilities for Christian service moored with furled sails within the undeveloped life. That boy, with his ardent spiritual nature, may be almost anything. He is full of possibilities. He has in him the making of a great preacher, or of a great teacher, or of a strong, compelling force as a Christian layman. That girl, with her rich, devout personality, may be a glorious light in the world, holding forth in many a circle of influence the bright example of fearless Christian womanhood. How keenly we feel the presence of these spiritual possibilities in young lives; these unfulfilled prophecies of power. But their fulfilment

depends on Christ coming in like the strong sea-tide to fill those lives with himself. Without him they can do nothing. Without him the early spiritual impulse will ebb away, and these great possibilities will remain like the ships when the water is gone, listed in utter helplessness and inefficiency upon the barren sand.

Let me now turn from this study of life from which Christ is excluded, and speak of the coming in of this mighty Christ power, like the full, fresh tide from the unbounded sea into the empty river channel. Let me, if I may, suggest to you thoughts of its wealth of power, its abundant life, its resistless energy; the gift of the sea to the river, of the infinite to the finite, of the Spirit of God to the spirit of man. Think of that ocean tide to-day, setting up against all the coasts of the world, filling a thousand rivers to the brim, yet losing none of its own unfathomable fulness. Think how Christ may be entering to-day the empty channels of a thousand lives, giving to each of them the fulness of his Spirit, pouring into each of them the abundance of his strength, lifting the stranded purposes in each of them up from sunken neglect into useful and joyous liberty; yet, for all that lavish self-giving, he himself an undiminished ocean of grace and truth, because in himself the very fulness of God. Well did the apostle say, "The glory of this mystery — Christ in you." It is a mystery, the most glorious and exalting of all mysteries, this coming of Christ with power into our inmost life. Whether we view it in the divine giving, or in the human receiving, we can only say, "The glory of this mystery — Christ in you."

View it first on the divine side, — the gift of the ocean to the river, the gift of the infinite to the finite,

the gift of the Spirit of God to the spirit of man, — and see the glory of the mystery.

What mysterious glory in the thought that God will give himself to man, will enter man's life, and fill all its channels with power and grace, even after sin and self-neglect and the wasting of opportunity have drained life of so much of its own power. Yet God would be to each of us as the ocean to the river. He would fill us with himself. It is only the bar we throw across the mouths of our life, closing the channel against him, prevents the fulness of his life from entering into us. It is his will to dwell in us. "Ye are," says his Word, "the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them."

What mysterious glory in the thought that this purpose of God to dwell in us is revealed in Christ; that Christ, whom we can understand, whom we can call our Brother, whom we can love as our Friend, *is* this great ocean-fulness of God that enters our life. "In him," says St. Paul, in words never to be forgotten, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full." It is sometimes asked: Why make so much of Christ? Why look upon Christ as the medium of the divine self-giving? Why not leave Christ out, and speak only of the Father? The only answer we can make is in the faithful word of Scripture itself: "It was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself." We may not be able to explain this mystery of Christ in us; but we know that when Christ *is* in us, we have received the gift of the ocean to the river, the full tide of the more abundant life. It is when no bar rises before

the mouth of our life to keep Christ out, there comes to us the answer of that great apostolic prayer: "That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

And once more, looking at this truth on the divine side, what mysterious glory of honor and of responsibility in the thought that this revelation of Christ for the Inner Life has been reserved for us who live in this latest and brightest dispensation of the divine truth. There were other and earlier dispensations, wherein men walked in light more dim, and were dealt with in ways less exalting to the spiritual sense. But in his mercy, God hath provided some better thing for us, this great revelation of the Spirit, this great gift of the ocean to the river,—Christ for the Inner Life: "the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations; but now hath it been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." How can any one shut Christ out of the Inner Life when he reflects that this Christ power, to which entrance is denied, is the gift for which generations of old were looking and longing, and died without the sight!

Finally, let me speak from the human side of the glory of this mystery, of Christ for the Inner Life. Go to the river when the tide is out, when the flats are bare, when

the boats lie careened and helpless. Go to it again when the tide is in, when the shallows are depths, and the bars are sparkling waterways, and the ships are slipping their cables and bending their sails. You have seen a great change. But you have seen a greater change than this, if you ever saw a life when it had lived without Christ until the early spiritual sensitiveness had ebbed away, and the bare materialism of the lower nature had come to view through prayerless, Christless years, and the powers for service had fallen into disuse, and the channels of expression were emptied of God, and you had mourned over the life as a life that was running dry. And then you saw that life again, in the mystery of the glory of Christ within it. The bar that blocked so long the entrance to that life was torn away by the ocean's importunity—the fulness of Christ had come in, bringing the infiniteness of God to fill the emptiness of self. Are there any words in the language of man that can do full justice to that coming in of the tide in its effects upon the life it enters? So mysterious and so glorious. *Restoration, Honor, Power.*

The glory of this mystery of Christ in us is Restoration! The river-channel was made to hold the fulness of the sea. The spirit of man was made to receive the Spirit of God. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The river-bed without the ocean is not its true self. The human spirit without the indwelling Christ is but a river-bed without water. A man, a woman, a girl, a boy, who lacks this glorious mystery of Christ within, is a defective and an unfinished life. It may be strong at many other points, and beautiful in many other ways; but lacking the presence and power

of Christ in the Inner Life, it is weakest where it should be strongest, and barren where it should be most truly beautiful. The life that is without the indwelling Christ is more maimed than if it had lost an eye, more sorrowfully deprived than if the ear were dull as stone. For we are not only made *by* God, we are made *for* God; that he may dwell in us; and we are not what in his mind we are meant to be, till we have received his fulness, and know for ourselves the mystery of the glory of spiritual life. Regeneration is then Restoration. It is indeed new birth; but the new birth is the creation anew within us of that primal, normal life which died within the race when sin entered into the world, and death through sin.

The glory of this mystery of Christ in us is Honor. An unconquerable grace and dignity invest the person of Christ. Christ is majestic. And when he comes within us, all our life is honored and ennobled through his presence. At his coming the flat and barren materialism of our unspiritual thinking is covered and buried beneath the clear, deep waters of earnestness and grandeur of purpose, and love and prayer, which come with him. Every life he is truly permitted to enter becomes in him a grander life. He seems to sweep pettiness and meanness of thought out of sight. He seems to swallow up in his broad fulness the failing streams of our moral life that were growing shallow and turbid. Christ is great and clear and beautiful and noble; and if he fills us in our inmost life, then — wondrous and impossible though it may seem — we receive of his fulness, and as he is, so are we in this world. Yet why should we call this wondrous and impossible? We have had friends who ennobled us by their nobleness. We could not re-

sist them, but became beautified in spirit by their beauty seeking our inmost life.

“The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.”

Must not Christ do more even than this when he enters our inmost being? Is not he that deepest soul, the *Soul of God*, who must lift us to the level of God's life?

And then, Power. The glory of this mystery of Christ in us is *Power*. No longer the ship lies listed in helplessness. The life of the sea brings back opportunity, restores power. No longer a wasting, helpless life lying hard and fast in sin. In the name of Jesus Christ, arise! He lifteth thee, by the element of his own life, into opportunity and into power! Wilt thou, then, unbar thy life, my friend, and let him in — the Christ for thy inmost life — the ocean for the river-bed?

II.

POWERS OF THE CHRIST-FILLED LIFE.



THE POWERS OF THE CHRIST-FILLED LIFE.

“I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.”

WE have thought of Christ for the Inner Life. “The glory of this mystery — Christ in you.” Let us now carry that great thought to one of its many conclusions by considering “*The Powers of the Christ-filled Life,*” the enlarged resources, the multiplied abilities, of one into whose Inner Life the fulness of Christ has come as the ocean-tide into the river-bed. “I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.” Those who read the Greek, and who will read this verse in the Greek, will instantly perceive the incomparable force and buoyancy of the language employed therein. “I am strong for all things in him that infuses strength into me.” By nature we human beings are ambitious and aggressive creatures. We like not only to be, but to do. We aspire not only to exist, but to accomplish. Periods there are, no doubt, of high satisfaction with our surroundings, of delicious content in our environment, when the luxury and opulence of mere existence are more enviable than exertion; hours, or even days, of delight, when one is satisfied to bask in sunshine; days perfect in their ways, whereon one says: —

“It is enough for me
Not to be doing, but to be.”

But such seasons are interludes in the great symphonic poem of life; they are not its main theme. Invariably

the healthy spirit reverts from the delicious interlude of rest in mere existence to the heroic theme of action and accomplishment. This is our nature; this is our heredity from God. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Christ. It is godlike to *do*; to work; to accomplish; to express power by *results*.

Therefore, considering us as mere human beings, obedient to inherited instincts, possibly the saddest word in human speech is "*I cannot*," and possibly the most joyous word in human speech is "*I can!*" "*I cannot*" — the sense of impotence, the doom of inability, the sub-consciousness of deficient power; what is there more bitter in the mixture of the cup of human sorrow? *I cannot!* It comes to the paralyzed, as only they can understand who have been stricken down in the fulness of an active life. The strong, obedient right hand, that never disobeyed one's will, that wrote one's thoughts into letters and books, or painted them into color and shape upon the glowing canvas, or played them into sacred and celestial harmonies upon the organ manual, lies on the bed beside one, senseless and shrunken, like a withered branch. *I cannot!* It comes to the blind. Never again another sunset lacing the burnished west with "nebulous bars;" never again the glint of a sail at sea, nor the swing of a cloud at midsummer noon; never the spread of an eagle's wing, nor the billows of breeze across upland wheat; never the sight of stars; never the page of a book, nor the pictured form; never the face of friend, nor the gleam of love from answering eyes. The power for these all gone. *I cannot!* It comes to them that are growing old, in whose hearts, be it never forgotten, may still be burning some of the fires of youth. In many an aging life, old as to power whilst still young

as to will, the sting of the "I cannot" is this: "Would God I could." *I cannot!* It comes to many an intellectual mind fettered by poverty, or by imperious restraints of duty, from fulfilling its broad and pure ambitions. A lover of books, yet by the irony of some distressful occupation kept away from them; a dreamer of foreign travel, and of the wideness of the world, yet fenced by the wall of poverty within a small and prosaic routine; a lover of public work, of broad missions to souls, yet chained by what is felt as duty to the dungeon of a buried life. *I cannot!* It comes to the heart of man or woman swayed by an impossible love, knowing what might have been yet may not be, or what might be yet cannot be, or what ought to be yet is not.

So also, on the other hand, perhaps no thought is more richly freighted with the joys and hopes of human lives than that which is expressed in the clear, strong words, "*I can.*" It is the sense of potency, the power to do, the inspiration of congenial opportunity. *I can!* The child feels it without defining it, and utters it in songs without words. It is the bliss of vitality, the buoyancy of an abounding life. The youth in the summer meadow, "walking and leaping and praising God," with laughing eye and tossing curls and dauntless step, wears, as a very coronet of light upon his brow, that glad *I can.* The thoughtful mind of riper years feels at times, with all but overmastering strength, that inestimable sense of potency; that one has eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hands to do one's bidding, and the full equipment of all the attributes of personality, and the mystic gift of health, whereby one touches life's great possibilities, and says, in the reverential whisper of an unspeakable thankfulness, *I can!* It comes to one in the sense

of education ; that one is in the precincts of the world's intellectual life, and not on the wastes of ignorance outside ; that one is not ruled out by illiteracy from taking part in the movements of thought, nor ostracized by cloddish dulness from the fellowship of such as care for more in life than its material uses. Education is potency, and creates out of nothing for every one of us a world barred against ignorance—a world before whose open gate the scholar stands, as a son before his birth-right, feeling, with thoughts too great for words, that vast *I can*. It comes to one with the the broad unfoldings of life's pure affections. Love in an open door, leading out even unto God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love." Affection is power. Pure affection is power for good. To love reverently, and to be so loved, enriches the resources of personality, makes one worthier to live, and reveals to one's soul new possibilities in that word *I can* !

But when we have spoken of health and reason and education and love, we have not risen above the level of the natural life. Great as these things are, considered as elements of that sense of potency which makes life worth living, there is a greater thing than these within the reach of every one of us. A greater thing, not only in its intrinsic height and depth and length and breadth, but also in its power to keep lives strong with a mighty strength, even when health is broken, or love has met with cruel disappointment. That royal sense of physical potency which we call "perfect health" may be impaired by the strain of toil, or by the inroads of sickness. That sweet self-assurance of a confident affection may receive the shock from which it never wholly recovers. But there is a strength unconquerable by

these adverse conditions ; there is a sense of potency whose basis is spiritual, not earthly ; there is a grand and glad *I can* sounding on above the plaintive undertone of many a sad *I cannot* ; there are powers which the world can neither give nor take away. They are the powers of the Christ-filled life. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

It is not for me to presume that I can name, or that I am competent to know, all the powers of the Christ-filled life which may have been exhibited by those who shall read these words. But it may perhaps be mine, because of the deep reverence wherewith I have studied lives, as one studies the most precious books, to have learned some few of the "all things" which the Christ-filled life can do, when day by day, from the vast ocean of God's life, the ever-fresh fulness of the eternal tide of strengthening is pouring into the river-bed of the soul. I have seen the powers of the Christ-filled life express themselves on two great lines of energy,—as opposing and vanquishing evil, as grasping and using good. And so, in the *all things* which one can do in him that strengtheneth, in the heroic boundlessness, the approximate omnipotence of the truly Christ-filled life, there are, one may say, *powers of resistance*, and there are *powers of attainment*.

"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." No empty boast was this for many a Christ-filled life that met the evil of this world, to resist it, and to rise above it in a strength not its own. The memory of many must join with my own to supply, even from the lives that we have known, examples of powers of resistance against oppressive and discouraging conditions, which were evidently the powers of Christ-filled lives.

Let me speak of those powers of resistance as they wrought victoriously, in one and in another, against physical pain and ill-health, against the tyranny of passion, against the unspiritual drag of life.

“I can do all things in him.” Thus has the spiritual force and buoyancy of many a Christ-filled life risen above, and lived for blessed years beyond, the break of health, and the disheartening doom of bodily pain. Thus has the tide of God’s strong life borne the highest gifts of personality up for brave expression, long after the powers of the flesh were strained and wrecked on the barren sands of invalidism. How shall we describe this wondrous resistance of the physical doom, as we have seen it accomplished in some seraphic personalities whose very names bring tears of thankfulness as we remember them serenely living above their sufferings? It was not stoicism: the fierce contempt for pain, the grim resolution of an iron will. This was not their secret. For many of them were frail and sensitive beings, to whom pain was terrible, and who could no more be physically indifferent to pain than is the aspen leaf to the east wind. It was this! — a Christ-filled life rising above its physical sufferings, and out of weakness made strong for service, as if borne forward on the very tide of God’s strength. I have seen the Christ-filled spirit conquer the lassitude of an enfeebled body, and prolong heroic usefulness through years of hourly victory over the dull insistence of organic pain. I have seen the wheeled chair of the invalid become a throne of godlike influence, and even the pillow of the bedridden a focus of light within the house, and a distributing centre of power to many lives. It is a great, great thought for those who must run in life so many risks of the body,

that, for a Christ-filled life, all has not gone when health is gone; and the sadness of the physical "*I cannot*" may often be swallowed up through long and fruitful years in the greater joy of the spiritual "*I can.*"

"I can do all things in him." Thus has the spiritual force of many a Christ-filled life risen above the tyranny of passion, even of passion strengthened sevenfold through habitual indulgence. There is nothing nearer to omnipotence given unto man than that strange gladness of the Christ-filled life, when, coming up to old temptations against which, in the former days, there would have been a brief resistance of the will followed by collapse under stress of inclination, it finds within a new power, not its own, which lifts it to where that former deed seems separated from, and far beneath, one's present life, and the thralldom of the old self-indulgent "*I can*" is supplanted by a magnificent *incapability* of doing the old deed. Far off from earliest history sounds with immortal sweetness that fresh young voice, expressing the grand incapability for gross sinning that comes to the life which God has filled. "How *can* I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" And from the richest part of the New Testament is brought to us the same great thought, that a Christ-filled life becomes incapable of certain sins. "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin; he cannot sin, because he is born of God." He can, and he cannot. He *can*, in that the tyrannous effort of passion to subdue him is quite the same, and the predispositions of nature are unchanged. But he *cannot*, because the fulness of God's life has come to him, the ocean has filled the river-bed, and lifted the levels of thought and of action above low-water marks of old and shallow days.

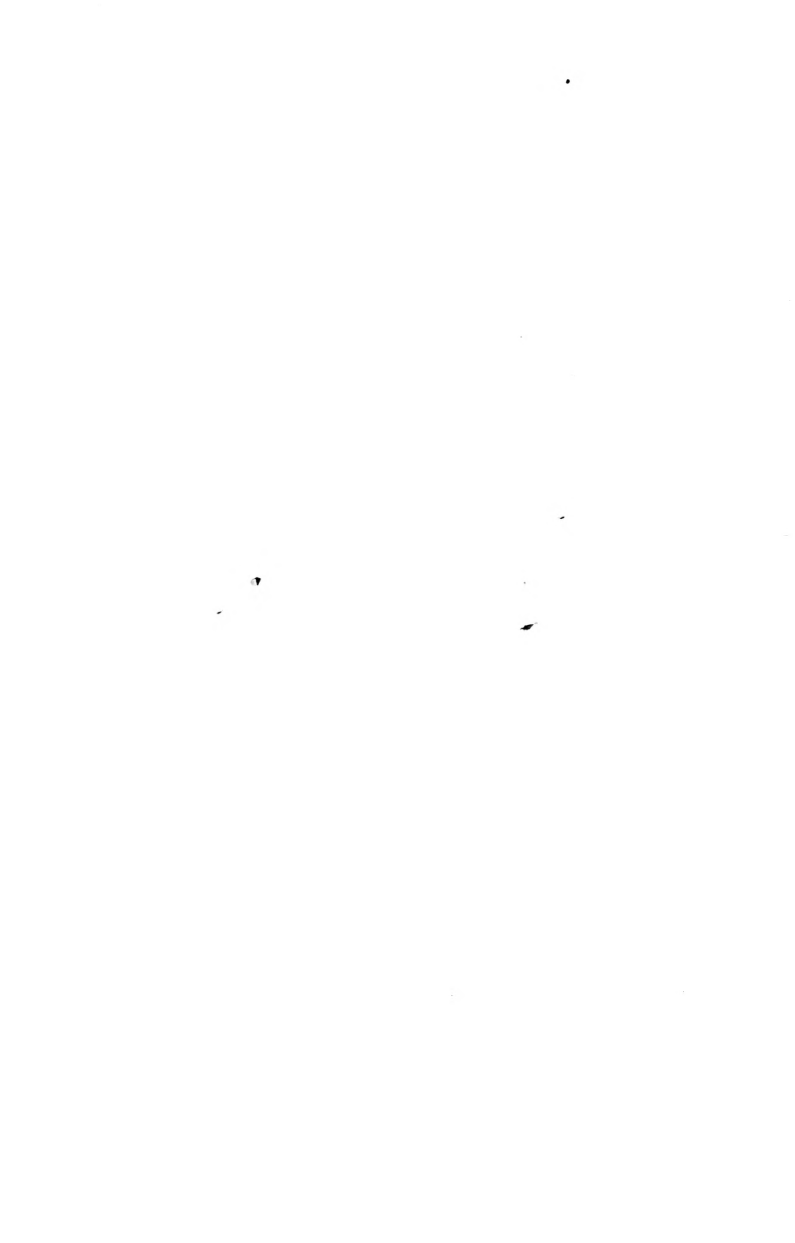
“I can do all things in him.” Thus has the spiritual force and buoyancy of many a Christ-filled life resisted the unspiritual drag of living. I know no truer term for that preponderance of dulness than the *unspiritual drag*. When one considers the shortness of life, the involuntary instinct that clings to life, and the many broad reasons that can be assigned for living, it is a striking contradiction, and the strongest *a priori* evidence of miscalculation somewhere, that life should, to a human being, become uninteresting and unwelcome; that the enthusiastic freshness of interest in living should, for so many persons, seem to abate; and for so many the years draw nigh when they say, whether truthfully or untruthfully, “I have no pleasure in them.” Three causes seem to lie back of this *drag* of life, — sin, routine, or melancholy. For some, sin, the past excesses of conduct, may explain, so to say, the loss of appetite for living. They have sinned against themselves; they have maltreated the finer parts of being, which cannot, in consequence, produce the enthusiasms inherent in an unprofaned personality. For others, routine turns life into a drag. The doing of the same thing every day becomes intolerable. Even grand routines of intellectualism become intolerable; and so they must be, if one forgets the things for which they stand, the ends for which they furnish means, the possibilities of collateral influence with which God has enriched them. For others, melancholy makes the drag of life. Intolerable continuities of sad thoughts, haunting memories, vexatious self-condemnations, half-suppressed malignities, — undying fires that smoulder long in their own ashes, then flare in the rushing wind of sudden recollection, and quiet down

again. These are the drag of life. How tenderly I speak of these things, — the sin, the routine, the melancholy. How clearly I see their power to controvert those God-given instincts and enthusiasms for living which appear in the child nature, and were meant to be our portion forever. The only remedy I know against them is the Christ-filled life, — the life into which day by day Christ is coming in the infinite vivacity of power. Do you wonder that I connect with Christ the thought of infinite vivacity? Was he not, you say, the Man of Sorrows? Yes, the Man of Sorrows toward all evil; the Man of Sorrows in his distress over our distress; the Man of Sorrows in his grief to see how life is spoiled for thousands by sin, by routine, and by sadness. But oh! for such as will receive him, the *Man of Joys!* He comes to give us life — life more abundant. He comes to cleanse us from our sins; to rebuild the nature defaced and broken by wrong-doing; “to restore unto us the years that the locust hath eaten.” He comes to pour new meanings into the common deeds of the common day; to exalt routine into opportunity; to change our selfish narrowness into his many-sided sympathy with lives. He comes to dispute the right of sorrows to claim all our life; he comes to take our part against the embittering memories that pursue us; to create for us new interests; to open before us new vistas; to call us away from ourselves for new service in the time to come; to give us back our lives comforted, calmed, exalted, and renewed in him. Such are some of the powers of resistance in the Christ-filled life, acting for liberty against physical pain and ill-health, against the tyranny of passion, against the unspiritual drag of sin, routine, and sorrow.

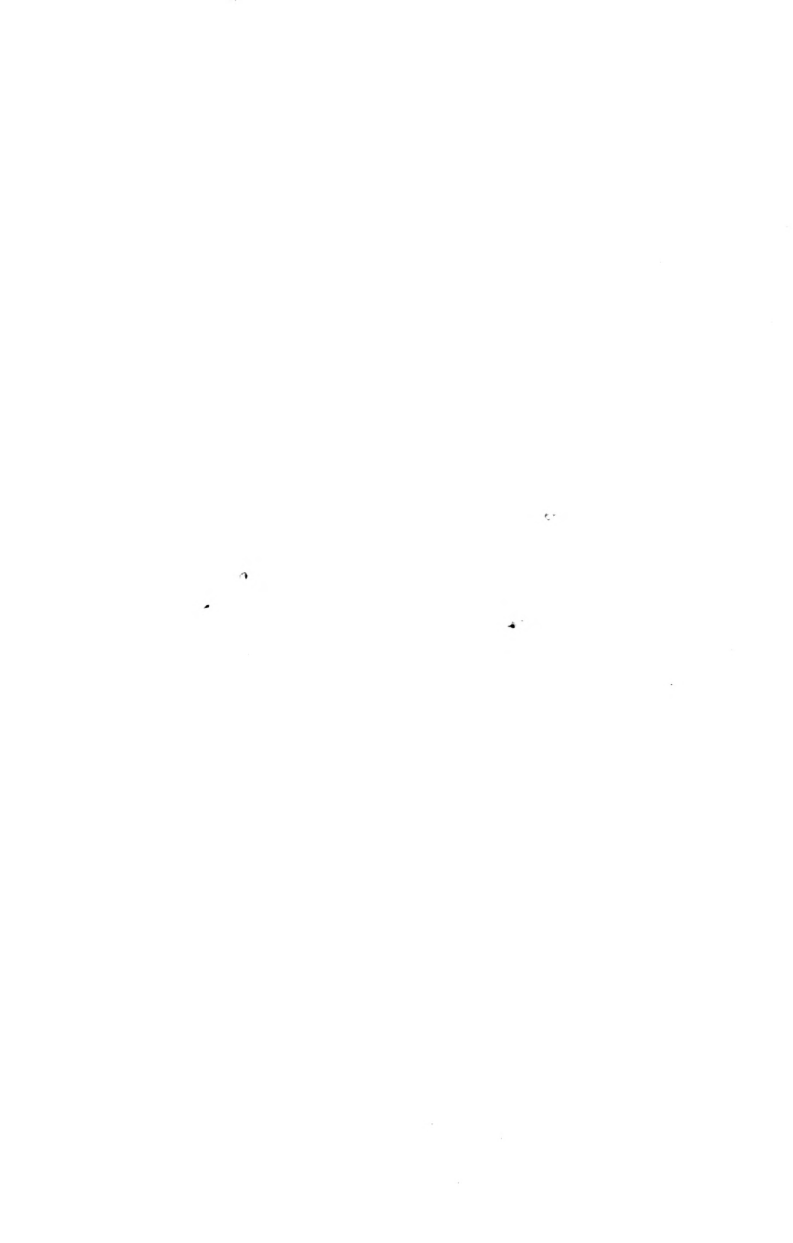
May I speak also one earnest word concerning those *powers of attainment* which belong to a Christ-filled life? Life is not all resistance of evil. Good is as real as evil. And they whose souls have been most full of Christ have seen most clearly the exceeding goodness of life. The Christ-filled life sees the best everywhere, because he who is the best fills the soul with the ocean of a great love. I can but name to you some of those powers of attainment that marked the most Christ-filled lives I have ever known, and that gave to their personality a certain boundlessness of possibility which made them often seem as if they could indeed do all things in him who so wonderfully strengthened them. One felt in such lives the power of appreciation, the power of insight, the power of influence. To the Christ-filled life belongs the power to appreciate other lives. A certain sacred reverence for lives was a mark of Christ, and it is the mark of those who are lifted to his level on the tide of his indwelling fulness. Such cannot be pessimists nor satirists nor scorers of souls. To them, compelled as others are to face the stark facts of human weakness, a heavenly voice seems ever saying, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common nor unclean."

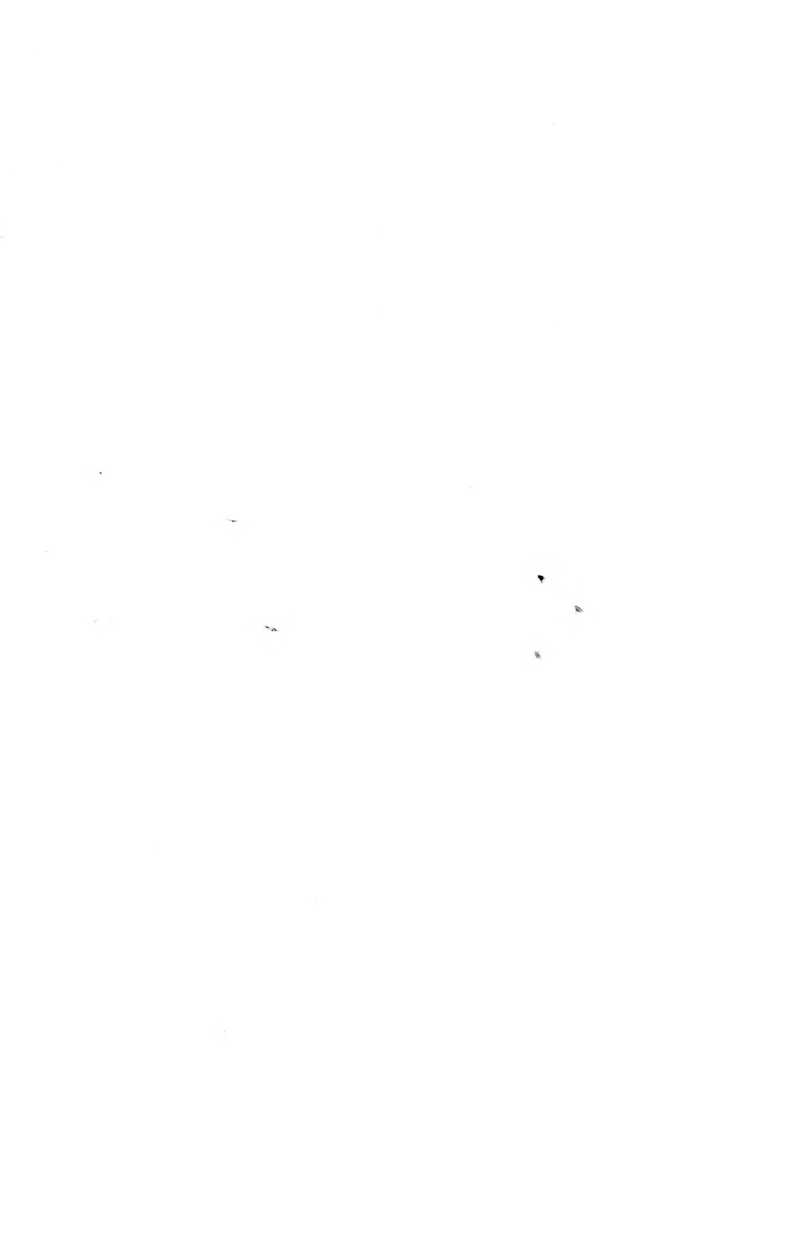
To the Christ-filled life belongs the power of insight into other lives. This is more than psychological cleverness; it is the mysterious wisdom of love. "Come," said the woman of Samaria, "see a man which told me all that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" It is the Christ, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. And in some small measure they who have *him* within them have his gift. They read, by love's clairvoyance, as he read, the secrets of other hearts.

To the Christ-filled life belongs the power of influence over other lives. The smaller self of nature merges in a larger self of grace, whose vocation is personal influence. Life, once a narrow stream, broadens like the sea. Strong tides pour in from fathomless depths, and cut new channels. Old landmarks of selfishness disappear. God overflows the soul, which, forgetting in its joy past days of shallowness and incapacity, feels within itself the current of new possibilities setting toward other lives; knows, without knowing why, that it *can* do all things in him that strengtheneth.









Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01004 1368